



# Bodega Land Trust



# Newsletter

"...When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." ... Aldo Leopold (1886-1948), *American Forester*

## Forty Acres of Occidental Redwoods Protected


By Sandy Sharp

**B**odega Land Trust is extremely pleased to announce the donation of a "forever wild" conservation easement on approximately 40 acres of second growth redwood forest in Brown's Canyon just south of Occidental. The property, at 3001 Bohemian Highway, is owned by Khysie Horn, proprietor of the Quicksilver Mine Company in Sebastopol.

Ms. Horn's purpose in granting the easement is to retain the property "in a predominantly natural, 'forever wild' condition; to protect the property's natural resources and watershed values; to maintain and enhance biodiversity; to retain habitat for native plants and animals; to maintain and enhance natural forest values; to prevent the selling of any tree or trees forever; and to foster the return of large growth legacy trees." She also intends that this easement will prohibit any use of the property that would significantly impair, degrade or interfere with the conservation values of the property. While preserving the west county's typical redwood forest environment, the easement also allows new construction within a clearly defined residential envelope.

The property also has historical value. The old rail line from Freestone to Occidental crossed the canyon near the bottom of the property and some of the trestle timbers are still on site.

Bodega Land Trust is explicitly given responsibility for the water. Brown's Canyon Creek, which runs across the property, is a tributary of Salmon Creek. The grant is thus another important link in BLT's efforts, in conjunction with the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District and the Salmon Creek Watershed Council, to protect and enhance the water quality and riparian corridor habitats of our watershed. We hope this will serve as an inspiration to others.

Thank you, Khysie Horn! 



Brown's Canyon

Photo: Sandy Sharp

Bodega Land Trust

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Member: Land Trust Alliance

# What is a Conservation Easement?

*Many people have asked us this very question – a very basic question for a land trust. What follows is a simple presentation of the basics. If you have further questions just ask. We are always happy to elaborate.*

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (a private, non-profit conservation organization) or government agency that permanently limits a property's uses in order to protect its conservation values.

When you own land, you also "own" many rights associated with it, such as the right to harvest timber, build structures, and so on. Each of those rights has a certain value. When you donate or sell a conservation easement to a land trust you agree to give up some of those rights. The choice is always up to you. For example, you might give up the right to cut timber, while retaining the right to grow crops. Future owners also will be bound by the easement's terms.

The conservation easement is written as a legal contract. It is tailored to protect the land's conservation values and at the same time meet the financial and personal needs of the landowner. An easement on property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit development of any kind, while one on a farm would allow continued farming and the building of necessary agricultural structures.

A conservation easement may apply to just a portion of the property, leaving the option of development open for another part. It may allow home building within a defined residential area.

The land trust has the legal responsibility to enforce the terms of the easement. If a future owner or someone else violates the terms – perhaps by erecting a building the easement doesn't allow – the land trust will work to have the violation corrected. The land trust sometimes asks for a donation from the grantor to help offset the cost of future stewardship expenses.

## Federal Income Tax and Property Tax Reduction

Easements can either be donated or sold. If you donate a conservation easement that meets federal tax code requirements then the value of the easement can be treated as a charitable gift and be deducted from your income tax, to the extent allowed by law. For income tax purposes, the value of the easement is the difference

between the land's fair market value without the easement and its value with the easement. If a property is worth \$500,000 unrestricted, for example, and an easement that precludes further development would drop its value to \$200,000, then the value of the easement is \$300,000, which can be donated. An easement can also be sold. If you should choose to sell the easement for less than fair market value, say \$200,000, you could still get a \$100,000 tax credit.


Easement values vary greatly; in general, the highest values result from very restrictive easements on land that has a high development value. In order to qualify as a charitable donation, an easement must meet federal tax code requirements. In essence it must provide public benefit by permanently protecting important conservation resources. However, an easement does not have to cover all of the property, preclude all use or development, or allow public access to qualify.

You may also reduce your property taxes permanently, according to the extent that the easement lowers the property's value. Check with your accountant.

## Reduction of Estate Taxes

As property values increase, so do your estate taxes. If you own land with substantial appreciation, you may not be able to pass it on intact to your heirs. They may find that the federal estate tax, which is based on the land's current fair market value and is levied at rates as high as 55%, is in the hundreds of thousands, or millions of dollars. Selling all or part of the land for development may be the only way to pay the estate tax.

However, if you place an easement on the land restricting future development, the land's fair market value will be reduced and stay reduced. This will result in lower estate taxes for your heirs.

A conservation easement can be donated in your will. It has the same effect on estate taxes as granting an easement during your lifetime. You should be sure to negotiate the easement with the grantee before including it in your will. This assures that the organization is willing and able to receive it and that the easement will achieve what you want it to do. 

For further information please call us at 876-3422 or 876-1806. We will be happy to answer your questions. All discussions are strictly confidential.

# Salmon Creek Watershed Council Update

By Kurt Erickson and Alistair Bleifuss

Salmon Creek watershed is bounded on the east by Jonive Road; on the north by the ridge above Bittner Road and by Willow Creek and Coleman Valley Roads; on the west by Coleman Valley Road; and on the south by the southern ridge of Salmon Creek valley and by Bay Hill Road. It empties into the ocean. It carries 34,000 acre feet of water per year... a lot of water wending its way and draining 36 square miles that catch about 40 inches of rain a year.


The Salmon Creek Watershed Council (SCWC), an affiliate of BLT, was formed in 1999 to learn more about the interaction between our watershed and its inhabitants. This knowledge will help us make decisions concerning the health of the watershed that reflect our local economic, social and environmental values. The Council invites all members of the watershed to share their desires, concerns, problems, and solutions regarding the watershed. For example, the limited water supply is a common thread yet a hotly debated issue. Making a living in agriculture requires good soil and water. Salmon and steelhead depend on cool water without sediment. Our homes need good water and good septic systems. No one entity can resolve all watershed issues. We need to work together. SCWC will work with BLT and the Gold Ridge Resources Conservation District (GRRCD) to achieve our common goals.

SCWC has been working toward a variety of goals, both long term and short term. Next May, we will hold the second Salmon Creek Watershed Day at Salmon Creek Middle School. The Harmony Union School Board is looking forward to working with us on class projects of all kinds. Before the event there will be poster contests for both kids and adults. The winning designs will be used as used as publicity posters. At the event there will be a fine art show offering an artist's eye view of the watershed. There will also be forums and presentations by highly regarded authorities on watershed topics of all sorts. Neighbors from other western Sonoma County watersheds have been invited to share their enthusiasm for both our common and unique watershed features.

Last summer, several SCWC members attended a five-day, intensive watershed workshop called "Basins of Relations". The workshop was organized by Brock Dolman of the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. The participants studied hydrology, road building practices, sustainable pasture management, stream restoration, funding sources, and other organizational and management tools, and had a lot of fun. OAEC plans to offer the workshop again in the spring.

SCWC plans to place roadside signs at stream crossings, naming the stream, to show people when they are entering or leaving the Salmon Creek watershed. We plan to erect larger "welcome" signs at our watershed boundaries. A more elaborate "Great Divide" sign and display is in the works for downtown Occidental where the Dutch Bill and Salmon Creek watersheds meet. The signs will reflect our belief that one's watershed is an excellent way to define one's territory.

SCWC has also begun working with the Sonoma County Parks and Recreation Department to develop a watershed historical and ecological display at the Watson School on Bodega Highway. We will work with the Bodega Volunteer Fire Department Historical Project and the Rancho Bodega Historical Society to present the growing collection of old photos, and written, oral and video stories from long time residents. We hope to continue the project up Salmon Creek through Freestone, Occidental, and up Bittner Road to Joy Road at the headwaters of Salmon Creek. So many families have such a wealth of stories to tell. Along with the rich and diverse ecological life found throughout our home, our family stories are deeply embedded in watershed history. Please contact us if you can participate in this historical bridge from our grandparents to our community of today.

SCWC welcomes everyone to our monthly meetings, held at 10:00 AM on the third Sunday of the month at Ocean Song on Coleman Valley Road four miles west of Occidental. For more information go to: [www.bodeganet.com/SalmonCreek](http://www.bodeganet.com/SalmonCreek) or call 876-3422. 

## The Salmon Creek Watershed Enhancement Program

The California Dept. of Fish and Game has granted funds to GRRCD to implement a Salmon Creek Watershed Enhancement Program. The program's objective is to facilitate restoration efforts with private landowners. The program includes outreach through newsletters and public meetings, a Rangeland Water Quality Short Course, identifying restoration projects and coordinating their implementation. For more information please call 824-1816.



# Good News From Watersheds Down South

*We think the following is an excellent example of people working together to solve common problems without government intervention, and deserves to be more widely read. –Editors*

*Reprinted, with permission, from the California Farm Bureau weekly AG ALERT, January 26, 2000*

## Cooperative Effort Cleans Up Watershed

By Kate Campbell, Assistant Editor

**H**ealthier waterways and a cleaner bay: These are goals of a historic alliance that harnesses the shared interests of Central Coast agriculture and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Details of the water quality action plan that has taken more than three years to hammer out were unveiled at a recent ceremony at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas.

Playing a prominent role in the development of this unique 24-point plan for reducing nonpoint-source pollution in the 11 watersheds that feed into the sanctuary is a coalition of six county Farm Bureaus. Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz County Farm Bureaus have agreed to work in concert to achieve the plan's goals.

"With this jointly developed plan, we finally have a framework to help make environmental improvements, where we can, on a volunteer basis," said San Benito grower Joe Zanger. As a member of the California Farm Bureau Federation board of directors, the San Benito County Farm Bureau, as well as the Farm Service Agency State Committee, which is a sister organization to the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Zanger has been actively involved in issues relating to the marine sanctuary for many years.

"But before we can help in cleanup and management efforts, we need to know what is really going on", Zanger said, referring to the need for better data on nonpoint-source pollution. "What part of the problem is contributed by active agriculture? We're trying to get funding to document that now."

Zanger said he thinks when the data is in that what agriculture needs to do to mitigate pollution won't be too expensive.

"It'll probably be a lot more about common sense," Zanger said. "I don't think we'll need to spend tens of thousands of dollars to put in infrastructure. Instead, we'll need to share information and support joint efforts."

Essentially, through the action plan, agriculture on the Central Coast has accepted responsibility for water quality improvement on agricultural lands. In part, this is in realization that the industry can no longer wait for government to tell it how to solve problems or for water science to be perfect.

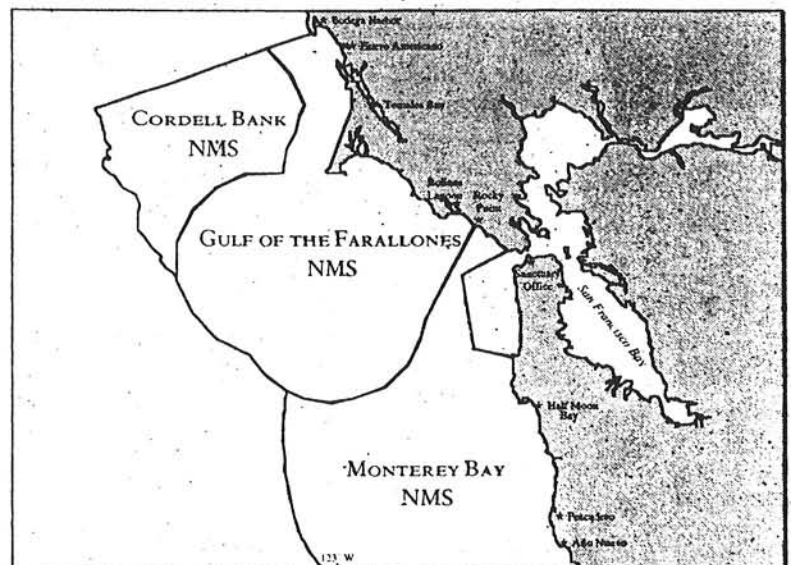
"We are turning the whole government regulatory process on its head and we're saying to regulators, 'stay back and let us show you what we can do,'" Sharan Lanini, executive director of the Monterey County Farm Bureau, said. "Our members know the waterways are vital. Fortunately, the ones along the Central Coast are fairly healthy. We also know they can be made better by pooling our ideas and efforts."

The sanctuary's Agriculture and Rural Lands Plan aims to balance protection of sanctuary waters with the economic viability of the region's agricultural industry, without the need for government regulation. Areas the plan specifically addresses are erosion and sedimentation control; reduction in nutrient concentrations, particularly nitrates, and managing water transport of old, persistent pesticides such as DDT, aldrin, chlordane and toxaphene.

These problems, and others, higher up in the 11 watersheds that feed into the sanctuary, eventually show up downstream in the relatively pristine waters of Monterey Bay. The sanctuary is the largest marine-protected area in the United States and encompasses 5,000 square miles of ocean off California's Central Coast. It spans more than 400 miles of coastline from Cambria in San Luis Obispo County to the Marin Headlands, extending as much as 53 miles offshore.

The area was given sanctuary status by Congress in 1992 in recognition of its dramatic underwater topography and biodiversity. It is home to 28 species of marine mammals, 94 species of seabirds, 345 species of fish, four species of turtles, more than 450 species of marine algae and 31 phyla of invertebrates. The sanctuary also includes the waters of Elkhorn Slough, one of the largest remaining wetlands in California and a key nursery for fishes. The slough is an important stop for migrating birds along the Pacific flyway.

Jones said, "I would like to see measurable improvements in the next three to five years. I hope that all the plan's goals will be achievable within the coming decade." 



# Archaeological Perspectives on the Sonoma Coast

By Hazel Flett

In Breck Parkman's eyes, mammoths once roamed in downtown Bodega, while saber toothed cats lay in wait. Breck, State Parks archaeologist, was giving a BLT-sponsored talk at McCaughey Hall in Bodega on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Within a single evening he took us from the earliest inhabitants of North America to the Gold Rush and beyond. The earliest inhabitants, according to the traditional theory, arrived about 12,000 years ago by crossing the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska; at this time, during the last Ice Age, the sea level was lower and the Strait formed a land bridge. They then moved south through ice-free corridors. This theory is contested, however. Some human remains in North America are claimed to be much older. Also people may have traveled by sea down the coasts, but with changing sea levels any evidence of them would have been washed away.

These earliest inhabitants came to a land teeming with large animals. Horses and camels originated in North America. There were mammoths and mastodons (a mammoth tusk was found at Bodega Head in 1974), several species of sloth, lions half again as big as African lions and bison half again as big as present day bison. Short-faced bears, at up to 3,500 lbs., were more than twice the weight of grizzlies. With their long legs they could run at 50 m.p.h. across the grassy plains. By 8 to 10,000 years ago all these animals were extinct in North America. Hunting by one of these waves of early people seems the most likely cause. Tellingly, the first Clovis point (a type of spearhead that appeared about 11,000 years ago) was discovered embedded in a mammoth.

Eleven thousand three hundred years ago there were paleo-Indians on our coast and in the Laguna area, but evidence is scant; at the coast changing sea levels may have washed away most cultural remains.

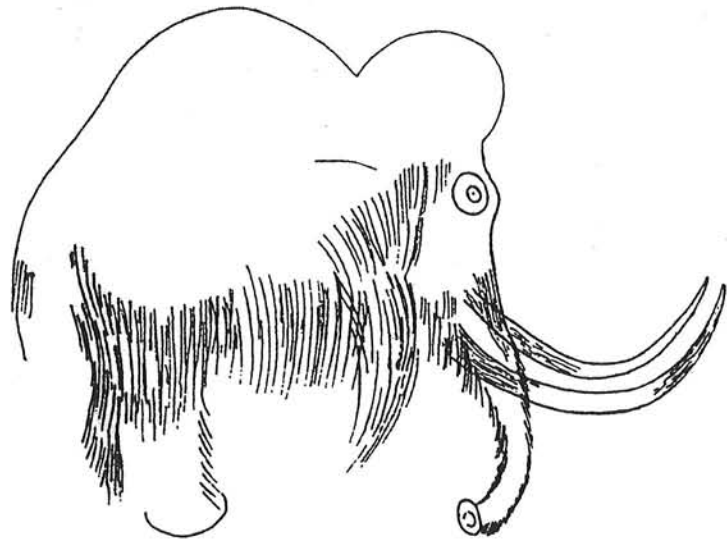
From 8,000 years ago there is more information. Breck described an archaeological treasure within Sonoma County State Parks. A cave at Duncan's Point has revealed a deep stratified midden (trash heap) going back at least 8,000 years, providing one of the longest records of human habitation along the California coast. From radio carbon dating and obsidian hydration data we know that the cave was occupied from 8,000 years ago to 3,200 years ago. The artifacts and animal remains unearthed there show that the occupants collected shellfish from the intertidal rocks; fished off the rocks and in tide pools; hunted marine mammals in rookeries and land mammals on the coastal terrace; they also hunted sea birds along the open coast and calm water birds in protected bays or estuaries; and they processed the animal materials for food and clothing. By 6-7,000 years ago they also gathered

nuts and seeds, milled plant materials and made baskets and nets. There is evidence of woodworking from 3-4,000 years ago onward and of shell ornament making most recently. This array of activities suggests the site was a year round residential base for both men and women. From the time the site was first occupied, tools were made from local rock, such as chert, and from imported obsidian. Either the inhabitants knew of distant obsidian sources (first the Napa Valley, then Annadel) or had already established trading relations with people who had a source.

Who were these occupants? Archaeological evidence suggests that the Pomo have lived locally for at least 8,000 years. Evidence for the Coast Miwok goes back 2,500 to 3,000 years. Duncan's Point lay within a boundary zone between groups that later became the Kashaya Pomo to the north and the Bodega Miwok to the south; it was a place of mythological or ritual importance to both groups.

Eight thousand years ago grass seed may have been the staple food. Around 4,000 years ago a change in technology is evident: the processing of acorns. Bowl mortars and bedrock mortars date from this period. Since a family of four can live for a year on the output of two big oak trees, this made possible an increase in population, which probably continued until the arrival of the Spanish.

Breck had many stories to tell. I have concentrated on ancient times and not covered his stories about where Drake landed or the colonization of local native Californians by the missions. They were also fascinating stories. Thank you, Breck, for magically transporting us through thousands of years of Bodega history. 🏠



Copy of an 11,000 year-old bone engraving from La Madelaine cave, Dordogne, France. Musée de l'Homme, Paris



# Stand by Your Land

*Here's a broader view of land trust activity we thought you might find interesting. —Editors*

*Land trust partnerships unite preservation of open lands with that of biologically diverse lands — and take on the sprawl that is eating away at America.*

*By Brenda Biondo. Reprinted with kind permission from Nature Conservancy, Sept./Oct., 2000*

Fifteen million years of history tower above the slow-moving waters of Parkers Creek. Entombed in the golden strata of the Calvert Cliffs — an eroded bluff stretching 30 miles along the Chesapeake Bay's western shoreline — are the fossils of more than 600 species, remnants of creatures that flourished when the area lay submerged under a warm, shallow sea.

Long gone are the crocodiles, shark-toothed porpoises and sperm whales. In their place, one of the last undeveloped creeks on Maryland's western shore, thrives the contemporary version of nature's bounty: great blue herons, bald eagles, and rare tiger beetles.

Also flourishing in the area, of course, are humans, some of whom are working at the grass roots to make sure the Chesapeake Bay's modern-day flora and fauna will be preserved in more than fossil beds and natural history books.

"Coming to this area is like stepping back in time," says Peg Niland, one of its staunchest defenders. "It's so unspoiled." Niland fell in love with Parkers Creek back in the mid-1980s, when she arrived as an employee for a developer planning to build 435 houses along the creek. When the developer's plans fell through, Niland fell in with a local land trust — the American Chestnut Land Trust — as a volunteer. She was its first employee and today is executive director.

Citizens around the country like Peg Niland, motivated by their concern for the loss of open space to surging sprawl, have created more than 1,200 land trusts, nearly 500 in the past decade alone. Not surprisingly, land trusts are mushrooming in areas with the highest growth pressure, such as in the Rocky Mountain states, where the number of land trusts has more than doubled in the past decade.

Land trusts protect land and water by buying or accepting donations of land or development rights. Funded primarily through private donations, they are not "trusts" in a legal sense. The great majority are locally based organizations that concentrate on protecting land in

their own communities. More than 40 percent are run entirely by volunteers, and they have protected approximately 5 million acres around the country. The Nature Conservancy, the largest U.S. land trust and one of the few working at the national level, has protected another 10 million acres plus.

As effective as they are individually, however, land trusts have a compelling reason to unite: the disappearance of 3 million acres of open space each year in the United States.

"With development pressures running rampant in so many areas, we have to marshal all possible resources to save open land," says Jean Hocker, president of the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization of land trusts that provides leadership and support for land trusts across the country. "We can't afford to be competitive. Most people in the land conservation business are faced with more urgent opportunities than they can handle."

Like marriages of both love and convenience, partnerships combine overriding concerns for open space and biological diversity with a practical approach to protecting land and water.

In rapidly developing Calvert County on the Chesapeake Bay, cooperation has helped the American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT) and the Conservancy's Maryland/D.C. chapter gain the confidence of and conservation dollars from the state. Over the past five years, the partners have undertaken eight collaborative projects in the watershed to protect all tidal portions of the creek.

In the first project, in 1995, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources asked the Conservancy to purchase on its behalf 230 acres at the mouth of Parkers Creek, habitat for the puritan tiger beetle and other rare species. ACLT, with its southern Maryland focus and knowledge, guided the Conservancy through the maze of local politics and personalities in negotiations and later agreed to manage the properties. ACLT's three-person staff and 100-plus volunteers maintain a public trail system, offer canoe trips, combat invasive weeds and oversee a hunting program — time-intensive activities that could have fallen on the Conservancy's shoulders.

These days, with the Conservancy turning its attention to protecting priority sites and landscapes across 63 ecoregions around the country, such collaboration is increasingly common. "Partnerships are especially important to address landscape-scale conservation and to do extremely complicated deals that require both a local presence and skills that a young land trust may not yet have," says Jean Hocker.

And at the heart of those partnerships are overlapping conservation values, where interest in biodiversity meets open-space, scenic and recreational concerns.

The Adirondack Mountains in New York are a 6 million-acre island of habitat for spruce grouse and other northern boreal and arctic tundra species rarely found in the continental United States. Half of Adirondack Park – a patchwork of public and private land larger than Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Glacier and Olympic national parks combined – is permanently protected as wilderness, but much of the remainder faces second-home development and road-building pressures.

"We realized a long time ago that, in the Adirondacks, you have to operate at a landscape level to truly protect the biodiversity we think is important," explains Tim Barnett, founding director of the Conservancy's Adirondack chapter. "The agricultural lands are the buffers that protect from encroaching development." Because the Adirondack Land Trust (ALT) has been working closely with the local farming community for 10 years, "we're putting our resources behind ALT," he says.

For more than a decade, Barnett's chapter has shared office space, expertise and even staff with the Adirondack Land Trust, which since 1984 has worked to preserve the region's agricultural, forest and open lands, with an emphasis on how they contribute to quality of life. "Farmers think about working landscapes as opposed to biology and ecology. So it made sense not to confuse people who might ask: 'What is The Nature Conservancy doing buying a farm?'" Further, the local farm bureau has endorsed the Adirondack Land Trust as the group the bureau prefers to hold easements purchased with state funds.

At the southeastern end of Adirondack Park, a similar symbiosis occurs between the Conservancy and the Lake George Land Conservancy, which works to preserve water quality along with rare plants and animals. Renowned for its nearly pristine waters, the narrow lake stretches 32 miles between high, rugged mountains, its clear blue surface dotted with more than 170 wooded islands. Within a day's drive of 80 million people, however, the lake risks becoming a victim of its own beauty. "We've lost so many pristine lakes around the country to over-recreation and overdevelopment," says Lynn LaMontagne, program director of the Lake George Land Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy subcontracts employees to the Lake George land trust and provides administrative assistance. The collaboration has helped the land trust protect more than 23,000 feet of shoreline and 7,000 acres, including recently a 1,000-acre parcel that had been eyed by a developer known for clear-cutting and subdividing. With funds loaned by The Nature Conservancy, the Lake

George Land Conservancy was able to jump in quickly and buy the property, the habitat of endangered timber rattlesnakes.

Due west, on Wisconsin's Door Peninsula, can be found further evidence that two heads are better than one in today's conservation arena, where the line between developed and protected is tenuous. Jutting into Lake Michigan, the peninsula has been a tourist destination for Chicago and Milwaukee residents since the turn of the century. In such a "found" place, finding an intact, dense forest of hemlock and white pine, rising above dolomite limestone cliffs and brimming with orchids and rare snails, is something of a rarity. When they realized such a forest existed but was threatened, the Door County Land Trust and the Conservancy were compelled to devise a creative way of protecting it in the face of imminent development.

The 900-acre parcel had been subdivided and many of the lots sold, but fortunately few houses built. The partners' strategy is based on minimizing habitat fragmentation: The Conservancy purchases small lots, combines them with others to create larger parcels, donates conservation easements on them to the land trust and sells the properties to "conservation buyers" – landowners who agree to development restrictions. "Because the land trust is handling the long-term management of easements, which is where a lot of the costs come from, it frees up our resources to do more work," says the Conservancy's Gue-nevere Abernathy. The land trust can receive a matching grant for the value of the conservation easement from the state, which can then be used to acquire other land and easements.

Across the country, the presence of local land trusts in areas targeted by the Conservancy for landscape-scale initiatives broadens the scope of possibilities. "Land trusts develop an awareness and appreciation of conservation in people who are supportive of open space and aesthetic values but not necessarily concerned with biological diversity," says Mike Tetreault, the Conservancy's Yampa River program manager in Colorado.

Sprawl's impact on open space and aesthetics is hard to miss in fast-growing Colorado, where more than 120,000 acres of open space, much of it ranchland, are lost to development every year. In north-central Colorado, "ranchland is the last vestige of ecologically healthy land along the Yampa River," says Tetreault.

The Yampa meanders through a wide valley, its banks lined with cottonwood and willow, sandhill cranes and bobolinks foraging in adjacent hay meadows. But as development encroaches from the Steamboat Springs and Vail ski resorts, local ranchers are tempted with offers of up to \$10,000 an acre.



Although the pace has accelerated in recent years, mering for decades. "When I first moved to the area in the '70s, I was very young and naïve, and just assumed that Steamboat would always stay a very small community," says Susan Otis of the Yampa Valley Land Trust. "Then I started to peek under the sheets of what was going on with development proposals and was just astonished. To me, it wasn't the vision of the community I wanted to live the rest of my life in."

In the 1980s, Otis began researching land conservation tools and got involved in the area's planning process. In 1992 she became executive director of the newly formed Yampa Valley Land Trust, which, to date, has protected nearly 18,000 acres, the majority of it ranchland. "This is not a job; it's an opportunity to make a difference."


Working with her to make that difference is Mike Tetreault. The two share office space and more: a vision of a valley protected from sprawl. The partnership between their two organizations helped to bring about Colorado's first conservation easement on agricultural land purchased with money from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), a state trust funded by lottery proceeds. The easement purchase also helped set the stage for GOCO's follow-up grant of \$6 million to a 14-party community partnership – including the Conservancy and the Yampa Valley Land Trust – to undertake similar work.

"Although easements seem quite simple, sometimes they get pretty complex, and land trusts need more advice on them," says John Millington, president of the Steep Rock Association, a Washington, Connecticut-based land trust founded in 1925. To provide that advice, even to land trusts considerably older than Steep Rock, the Conservancy and the Conservation Law Foundation of New England 20 years ago established the Land Trust Service Bureau. The bureau is staffed by Conservancy employees in Connecticut, and more than 100 land trusts around the state tap into the bureau. Millington says the bureau helps "with everything from organizational management and changes in tax laws to the very complicated ways that land can be used for tax deductions and for protecting an estate." Conservancy chapters in Michigan and elsewhere also are helping the Land Trust Alliance expand its own regional offices to support local land trusts.

Assistance can flow both ways, too. Local land trusts often play key roles in building conservation-friendly public policy. Especially as sprawl continues to send blood pressures rising around the country, land trusts are helping Americans channel their energy to effect lasting change. Last year, voters in communities across the country passed 90 out of 102 ballot questions for the protection of open space and parks, authorizing more than \$1.8 billion in local taxing authority and bonds. "Many of

those ballot questions were initiated by land trusts working with local government," says Russ Shay of the Land Trust Alliance. "Everyone brings something a little different to the table. It's that joint effort," he says, "that not only encourages success but helps it happen more quickly."

And speeding up the timetable can mean the difference between asphalt and open space. In today's booming economy, every month sees the construction of more than 130,000 homes – often on some of the most aesthetically beautiful, most ecologically sensitive land left. If a land-saving ballot initiative doesn't pass this year, how many acres will be paved over before voters get to act again? If a land trust can't raise funds fast enough to purchase easements from landowners, how many ranches and farms will end up sprouting a crop of condos and shopping plazas?

"Time is a huge factor these days in conservation," says the Conservancy's Tim Barnett. "The sooner we can help each other do the job we all believe in, the more successful we'll be." 

*Brenda Biondo covers conservation issues from Colorado Springs, Colorado*

## A GIFT OF REDWOODS

Margret Volkert and Christian Jones, of Oakland, CA, were married on October 6. She is the daughter of Judith Volkert of Bodega. They have donated 200 redwood seedlings to BLT in honor of their wedding guests. We will plant them as a grove at one of our restoration project sites, as a living memorial of the happy event.

This represents a breakthrough for us in imaginative donations. We hope it will serve as an inspiration to others to think "outside the box" when it comes to donations that will help protect and enhance the environment we all cherish.



# Native Californian Uses of Native Plants

By Hazel Flett

On a beautiful morning last May, on the cliffs above Shell Beach, Master Gardener Nancy Kismet led an unusual plant walk. Her subject was the native Californian uses of native plants.

As we walked, Nancy identified plants and told us about their uses. I think I can best give the flavor of her talk, which was a feast of very specific information, by sharing my jottings.

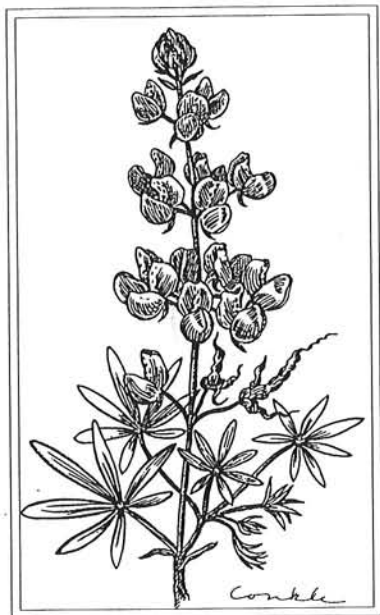
"Native Californians ate clover leaves and flowers, but they can cause bloat. Peppernuts (from bay laurel) counteract that."

"Yarrow is native in most of the temperate world. It's everywhere used to heal wounds; it stops bleeding and is an anti-inflammatory. Mash up the leaves and the flowers to make a poultice."

"Coyote bush was used for arrows because it's straight and pithy. Horsetail, which is high in silica, was the 'sandpaper' for arrows."

"Twinberry: native Californians made eye-wash from the leaves and pipes from the stems."

"Lupine: the roots were used for rope and nets, especially deer nets. Iris was also used for cordage – just the fibers, which are very strong; deer, gill, and fish nets were also made from them."



Lupine

Drawing by Nancy Conkle, from a set of 8 BLT note cards.

"Cow parsnip: the basal parts of the stem were used for salt, the very young leaves and shoots

were favored spring greens, the roots were used for lung and digestive problems, and the seeds for tea.

"Buckwheat is a mild diuretic; it soothes mucous membranes."

"Angelica was a sacred plant to the Pomo. It was used as a hunting charm, and dried angelica was hung in homes; shamans and singers chewed it. Medicinally the plant was used for indigestion and for bringing on menses; the root was good for lung problems." Nancy cautioned that the constituents of coastal angelica are not well known and may not be safe. "The strength of the medicinal elements in plants varies from site to site."

"Brodiaea bulbs were eaten in large quantities. They can be roasted in ground ovens or steamed, and are high in sugars and carbohydrates. Native Californians dug them with digging sticks that would break off the bulblets and cause the plants to spread and increase."

"For pinole they collected seeds from fifteen different grasses and from such flowers as monkey flowers, clarkia and mule's ears. The seeds were collected separately and then blended in different mixes for roasting and grinding; once ground they were sprinkled on other food for additional flavoring."

And much more. Nancy conveyed a picture of a people using the plants around us for food, medicine, cordage, implements, dyes and sacred purposes. Well, of course – but just think of the cultural knowledge that represented: identification, when to harvest, uses of the various parts of the plant, processing, etc. etc. Nancy is helping to keep that knowledge alive.

In passing Nancy mentioned the roles some of the plants play for birds and butterflies: "Hummingbirds love twinberry." "Poison oak berries are great winter food for birds." "Angelica is a larval plant for swallowtail butterflies." "Buckwheat is a great bee and butterfly plant; it's the larval plant for blues."

Nancy also gave tips on propagating some of the plants (like the gardener that she is) and cautioned us: **don't uproot the natives!** Buy propagated plants or propagate your own.

If you missed Nancy's talk and wish you hadn't, you can find out about other opportunities by calling the Master Gardener office at 565-3444. 🌱

# Potluck Cookbook Selected as One of the Best

*The Potluck Cookbook*, *Bodega Cooks for Bodega Land Trust* has been chosen to contribute recipes to *Best of the Best from California Cookbook*, the 29th volume in the acclaimed BEST OF THE BEST STATE COOKBOOK SERIES. With the aim of "Preserving America's Food Heritage" this series is widely considered the most comprehensive survey available of a state's particular cooking style and flavor. The California volume contains over 500 recipes from 123 of California's leading cookbooks. (Bodega, home of a leading cookbook?).

Editors Gwen McKee and Barbara Moseley began their search for California cookbooks two years ago. "It's a long process," says Moseley. "Becoming aware of all the leading cookbooks in a particular state takes a lot of digging". They found *The Potluck Cookbook* through Maureen Lomasney of Tannery Creek Press, the *Cookbook's* designer.

The editors found a diverse group of favorites ranging from well-known books by noteworthy authors produced by large publishers, Junior Leagues and other civic organizations, to delightful little cookbooks that rarely gain recognition beyond their own communities.

After collecting cookbooks from all over the state and choosing the ones to be included, the editors asked each author or editor to submit twelve recipes. "We reviewed so many delicious recipes that it was difficult to decide on the 500 or so to be included", says McKee, who found "so many new and creative ways to prepare every imaginable dish."

Collectively, the recipes convey the unique variety of California cooking, providing an insight into California culture and people. "California cuisine almost defies description. It, like the state itself, is so full of an incredible variety of everything. It is the fruit plate, the salad bowl, the fish net, the wine glass...perhaps the dinner plate of the world," McKee adds. Bodega's cookbook adds the potluck tradition to the collection.

For those who admit to reading cookbooks like novels, this one also features tips and tidbits told by authors, chefs, and hometown cooks. Each contributing cookbook is described in a catalog section, along with information for ordering direct.

## BLT has a new cookbook to sell.

BLT is selling *Best of the Best* at the retail price of \$16.95; half of this amount goes to land conservation (i.e. to Bodega Land Trust). So, if you have already bought *The Potluck Cookbook* and given it to everyone you know, then here is the answer for Christmas 2000: give *Best of the Best*. You may buy it at the Land Trust dinner on November 4, at the Bodega Christmas Fair on Nov. 24 & 25, or direct from BLT at any time by calling 876-1806. It is also available at Roadhouse Coffee in Bodega. *The Potluck Cookbook* is still available at these local stores: Artisans' Coop, Bodega; Roadhouse Coffee, Bodega and Bodega Bay; Hand Goods, Occidental; River Reader, Guerneville; Copperfields, Frizelle-Enos, Quicksilver Mine Company, and Whole Foods Market, Sebastopol.

## BLT Membership Form

I would like to join or continue my membership at:    \$10    \$20    \$50    \$100    Other

Please make checks payable to: Bodega Land Trust and mail to: PO Box 254, Bodega, CA 94922

**All donations are tax-deductible**

### I would like to become involved as:

- an interest group participant
- an advisor
- a Board member
- an occasional volunteer
- other:

My special interests are:

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A project I'd like to see the Bodega Land Trust consider:



# Bodega Land Trust

Fourth Annual

## *Sit-Down Dinner & Silent Auction*

Saturday, November 4 at 6:00 PM

McCaughey Hall, Bodega

Special guest appearance by the New Bodega Choir

Adults \$10.00, children under 12 \$5.00

Reservations suggested. Call 876-3422 or 876-3402.

*A bountiful meal with salad, dessert, and choice of main courses, including a vegetarian dish.*

*Many organic ingredients.*

*Corkage on request.*



*Newsletter Staff:* **Editors:** Linda Esposito, Hazel Flett and Sandy Sharp  
**Design:** Sandy Sharp

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